

Part VIII Proclamations

Centennial Handbook



*Looking for some friendly advice
about issuing proclamations? Look
no further*

Obtaining a Proclamation

Many public officials welcome the invitation to participate in good causes.

One of the most significant things your field station can do to draw local, statewide, and even national attention to your refuge—and the System as a whole—is to obtain a proclamation for National Wildlife Refuge Week from the governor, mayor, or local county official(s). In fact, you can get a proclamation for any special event you are holding.

Many people shy away from trying to get a proclamation, thinking it is a difficult and daunting task. Not so! Getting a proclamation can be surprisingly simple. Many public officials welcome the invitation to participate in good causes and view proclamations as an easy avenue to positive press.

Getting Started

Contact the office of the governor or mayor immediately to inquire about issuing the proclamation. Find out exactly what they need, perhaps a particular form, or a sample proclamation from you. If you decide to send a letter, follow up with a telephone call within the week.

Be Prepared

If you get a commitment to issue a proclamation, you may be asked to provide a sample proclamation and additional information. Include news releases and fact sheets on your event and the National Wildlife Refuge System. Also send other information that is specific to your refuge or field station.

Try, Try Again

If you are not successful with the governor or mayor, don't stop there. Contact local officials in the communities surrounding your field station. Use your network, if need be. For example, call someone you've worked with who knows a city official, and ask him or her to help. This can be a very effective approach.

Make it a Media Event

A proclamation is wonderful, but the more people who know about it through stories in the media, the more visibility you will gain for your refuge and the System. Suggest and coordinate the media event and media contacts with the official's public affairs office. Provide as much support and as many photo opportunities as appropriate. Remember to show the Service patch.

Sample Letter

Request a Proclamation

Honorable _____
Governor/Mayor
Address
Street
City, State, Zip

Dear Governor (or Mr./Madam Mayor):

I am writing to request that you issue a proclamation declaring October (date) as National Wildlife Refuge Week in (state/city.) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the second full week in October as a time to celebrate this unique and magnificent network of lands that make up the National Wildlife Refuge System—lands that were specifically set aside for wildlife. This is the (sixth) (Note: NWR Week was started in 1995 so in year 2001 it will be the sixth) annual National Wildlife Refuge Week—an event leading up to the Refuge System’s 100th anniversary in 2003.

(Name of your refuge) near (city) is one of the more than 530 national wildlife refuges that make up this diverse System of lands—93 million acres of lands that span every state and U.S. territory. These lands are home to such species as grizzly bear, caribou and bison, as well as hundreds of species of birds.

(Name of your Refuge) is celebrating our heritage with special activities and events for our neighbors and visitors from other parts of the country, and indeed the world. A proclamation would have particular significance to (state), and there are now (number of refuges and names of all refuges in your state.) They form important links in the National Wildlife Refuge System and provide innumerable opportunities for recreation, including hunting, fishing, wildlife photography and observation, and environmental education and interpretation. Spending related to these activities generates valuable revenue for (community/state’s) economy.

For your information and convenience, I enclose a sample proclamation, along with news releases and other background information about the National Wildlife Refuge System. If you have any questions or would like further assistance, please do not hesitate to call (name) at (phone.) I look forward to a positive response and to working with your staff to make this happen.

/s/ Regional Director or
Project Leader

Sample Proclamation

Whereas: National Wildlife Refuge Week is hereby pronounced in (state) from the (date) through the (date) of October. This week is a time for the citizens of (state) to join thousands of others across the country in learning about and celebrating the magnificent network of lands known as the National Wildlife Refuge System which we, as United States citizens, have set aside for wildlife; and

Whereas: National Wildlife Refuge Week recognizes almost a century of conservation in the United States. President Theodore Roosevelt established the first National Wildlife Refuge—Pelican Island in Florida—in 1903 to protect herons, egrets, and other colonial water birds. During his presidency, Mr. Roosevelt created 55 additional refuges; and

Whereas: Today, the National Wildlife Refuge System encompasses more than 530 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas across the United States, including one or more in every state and U.S. territory. Covering more than 93 million acres of land, the National Wildlife Refuge System is the only public land system in the world dedicated to wildlife and conserving wildlife habitat. National wildlife refuges encompass every kind of ecosystem in the U.S. including temperate, tropical, and boreal forests, wetlands, deserts, grasslands, and remote islands and support hundreds of endangered and threatened wildlife species; and

Whereas: Most national wildlife refuges are open to the public so that all can enjoy hunting, fishing, wildlife photography and observation, and environmental education and interpretation, while learning about our natural heritage;

Now Therefore, I _____ Governor/Mayor of (city/state), in recognition of this important event, do hereby proclaim the week of October (date) in (city/state) as National Wildlife Refuge Week.

Governor/Mayor

of (city/state)

In witness whereof I have
hereunto set my hand and caused
the seal of the State of (name) to
be affixed

Sample News Release

Announce a Proclamation

For Immediate Release: (date)
Release #

Contact: (Name)
Phone:

Governor/Mayor Proclaims National Wildlife Refuge Week

Governor/Mayor (name) of (name of city/state) has proclaimed the week of October (date) as National Wildlife Refuge Week.

(Add a quote here from the Governor's/Mayor's proclamation or news release; mention the refuges in their state/locale and any events that may be going on.)

The Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has officially designated this, the second full week of October, as National Wildlife Refuge Week. The goal of the celebration is to raise awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the more than 530 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas that make up this unique and magnificent public lands system.

Communities across the country will host local events, including photography and art contests, bird walks, open houses, and many other activities that increase public recognition of the biological, social, and economic values of national wildlife refuges. National Wildlife Refuge Week (year) is the (number) annual refuge week leading up to the System's 100th anniversary in the year 2003.

President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge at Pelican Island in Florida in 1903, and went on to establish 55 more during his presidency. This small beginning has grown to more than 530 refuges comprising over 93 million acres of land. This vast network of wildlife habitats protects millions of migratory birds, hundreds of the nation's critically endangered species, premier fisheries, and other species such as bison, caribou and elk. More than 35 million people annually visit refuges to enjoy activities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife photography and observation, and environmental education and interpretation. There is at least one refuge in every state and U.S. territory.